

AGENDA ITEM IV A

PROPOSED DISTANCE LEARNING PROGRAM

DELGADO COMMUNITY COLLEGE

A.S. IN NURSING AT LOUISIANA DELTA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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POLICY AND PROCESS

Academic Affairs Policies and Procedures Section 2.12 - Delivery of Academic Programs Through Distance Learning Technologies requires state colleges and universities that propose to offer more than 50% of an existing degree program through distance learning technologies to seek Board of Regents approval first before submitting a request for authorization through the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

The policy states that the following planning and quality issues must be satisfactorily addressed: appropriateness to role, scope and mission; lack of unnecessary program duplication; consistency with the Desegregation Settlement Agreement; funding provisions of Academic Affairs Policy 2.4 - Letters of Intent; adequacy of infrastructure and resources; consistency of program design with that offered on campus; and appropriateness of the curricular format.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

August 2003 - The Board of Regents adopts the following:

Conditional approval is granted for the proposed Associate of Science in Nursing program (CIP 51.1601) at Louisiana Delta Community College, subject to the following stipulations: 1. The College shall update the Commissioner of Higher Education on a periodic basis its progress toward attaining SACS/CoC candidacy; and 2. The College shall update the Commissioner of Higher Education on a periodic basis its progress toward program approval by the Louisiana State Board of Nursing. Once SACS/CoC candidacy has been achieved and the LSBN has granted program approval, then the Board of Regents shall consider a date for program implementation. Thereafter, the College shall submit annual reports to the Commissioner of Higher Education regarding its progress toward NLNAC program accreditation.

May 2004 - The Regents take the following additional action:

The Board of Regents receives the 2003-2004 Progress Report from Louisiana Delta Community College Relative to the A.S. in Nursing. The next progress report shall be due January 15, 2005.

Thereafter, the College did not submit any further progress reports. Staff inquiries into this matter revealed that the College was experiencing some difficulties in responding to requirements of SACS for institutional candidacy which was needed before the program could be implemented. Subsequently, the College changed administration and revised its SACS candidacy application without inclusion of the A.S. in Nursing program as an initial program offering. Since then, the College has been negotiating with Delgado Community College to offer its program on the Delta campus. Student interest is more than evident as some 100 students in the Monroe area have already completed all pre-Nursing academic preparation and are eager to proceed with professional studies leading to degree completion.

STAFF ANALYSIS

Planning Issues

The Associate of Science program in Nursing is currently offered at Delgado Community College (DCC). DCC plans to offer the didactic portions of all required Nursing coursework through distance education, while the practicum will be personally overseen by Delgado faculty employed at Delta. While exact course hours are somewhat hard to calculate finitely, it would appear that this arrangement would exceed the Board of Regents threshold of 50% of the required courses. Hence, Regents approval is required before Delgado can approach SACS for program delivery authority. It is hoped that SACS approval will be given in time for Delgado's Nursing program to be offered at Delta by Fall 2007. It is anticipated that the DCC will continue to offer this program at Monroe through Spring 2010, when it is expected that Delta will be ready to initiate a program of its own.

The program is appropriate to the role, scope, and mission of DCC. Program duplication is not a relevant issue—no such program is currently offered in the greater Monroe area. The Desegregation Settlement Agreement does not make any provisions for the development of any similar and/or related program at the state's predominantly black institutions of higher education.

Quality Issues

The proposed distance learning program replicates the same program already offered on Delgado's main campus in New Orleans; courses required for the programs will be offered through telecourses with supporting Internet assistance. Adequate infrastructure is available on campus to offer the programs electronically. With regard to distance learning teaching support, faculty receive special training prior to teaching assignments and additional expertise is available through the College's Distance Learning Center. The State Board of Nursing has already granted preliminary approval for this arrangement, consistent with actions of the Board of Regents.

Cost Issues

The staff was provided two budgets without explanation for this endeavor—one from Delgado and one from Delta. **(See Appendix.)** The budget from Delgado seems to be clear—revenues and costs balance out each year of the proposed arrangement, but with substantial additional monies from the state (Year 1 - \$123,567; Year 2 - \$129, 057; Year 3 - \$108,740). The staff can only assume that these figures represent the state’s contribution toward additional SCHs generated. The budget from Delta, however, is puzzling. While facilities costs, equipment, supplies, etc are expected contributions from Delta to support the Delgado program on its campus, the staff is curious why substantial personnel costs are also included (Year 1 - \$202,583; Year 2 - \$297,894, Year 3 - \$213,102) . If Delgado will be staffing this program, what function will these persons be serving?

STAFF SUMMARY

Delgado Community College has successfully addressed requirements of Academic Affairs Policy 2.12; the staff, therefore, concurs with the College’s request. As regards the issue of budget’s, the staff believes that careful and full review of funding of this arrangement is needed before implementation. To that end, a meeting with appropriate LDCC, DCC, LCTCS, and Regents staff should occur before program offerings commence.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

The staff recommends that the Academic and Student Affairs Committee grant approval for the request from Delgado Community College to seek authorization from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to offer its Associate of Science in Nursing (CIP Code 51.1601) program via distance learning technologies to the campus of Louisiana Delta Community College. Once SACS approval has been granted, a meeting between appropriate LDCC, DCC, LCTCS, and Regents staff is required to finalize budget arrangements for this endeavor.